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Press Reaction to TV Program on Wallenberg Case

I Dagens Nyheter (Liberal) February 9 (news report):

"The Foreign Office tells Dagens Nyheter that it is still unclear just how the Swedish rejection of the American offer of assistance was made -- and whether the rejection did at all come from Swedish quarters".

"The Foreign Office Press Bureau said Monday evening that it may be that Minister Staffan Söderblom (then Swedish Minister in Moscow) did not judge American assistance in the Wallenberg case as being profitable. The Minister himself had previously made several representations to the Soviet authorities without result. But on the other hand, it may have been the American Embassy in Moscow which felt that possible American assistance would not serve much of a purpose."

II Dagens Nyheter February 9 (editorial):

"The American Minister in Stockholm during World War II, Herschel Johnson, appears more and more as having been a driving force behind the efforts to clarify the fate of Raoul Wallenberg. This is seen from the three American telegrams which were published in full by the Foreign Office on Monday. A communique' from the Foreign Office also quotes a passage from a telegram from the Swedish Legation in Moscow; one must ask why that telegram was not quoted in full. The customary secretiveness?

"As the material is now presented it is partly contradictory. The telegram from Harriman to Washington says that Swedish quarters (apparently then Moscow Minister Söderblom) did not feel that an American approach in favor of Wallenberg would be desirable: because the Russians surely nevertheless 'are doing what they can'. The telegram from the Swedish Legation to Stockholm says that the American Embassy in Moscow 'is hardly likely to feel that anything is to be done for America's part' concerning Raoul Wallenberg. But could this not be a question of cause and effect? The negative Swedish attitude caused the American interest to decline.

"The fact is that a Swedish demarche was made shortly afterwards in Moscow concerning Raoul Wallenberg. But how much greater weight would not an energetic American action had carried at that time. With some interest shown by Sweden it would without doubt have been brought about. It is difficult not to be disturbed by the Swedish passiveness -- then."

III Göteborgs Handelstidning (Liberal), February 9

"After several days, the Foreign Office has produced some sort of commentary to the American offer of assistance in the

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Wallenberg affair which was recently referred to in a Swedish TV program. The Foreign Office publishes the American exchange of telegrams, but not the Swedish Moscow Legation's report on the subject. One quotation from this report appears in the Foreign Office communique', however. It is seen from the material available, that Washington instructed Ambassador Harriman in Moscow to assist the Swedes but that nothing was done. Harriman reported home that the Swedes in Moscow did not want any help, while the Swedish Legation in turn asserted that it was the American Embassy which saw no reason to intervene. A typical example of how unsatisfactory diplomatic reports can be. Unfortunately, one has reason to suspect that the Swedish version was doctored. The Americans were eager, but it is doubtful whether the same could be said about the Swedish Legation."

IV Svenska Dagbladet (Conservative), February 9

"The American material now published by the Foreign Office confirms in full measure the great and positive interest which Washington showed to shed light on the disappearance of the Swedish diplomat. ...

"It is an only too well known and a tragic fact that Swedish optimism and faith in the Russian intentions lacked any foundation. Nor is it surprising that many quarters have criticized the Swedish Government for its negative attitude toward the American offer. Here the leading Western Power promised to put its weight and authority behind an inquiry, but this possibility, the critics maintain, was not seized upon. The matter has also another side, however. At the time in question, the cold war which was to follow upon the Second World War was already under full development. The Russians' almost pathological suspiciousness against everything Western found expression in practically the entire territory where their troops had marched in, and everything was being done to wipe out the traces of Western Power activities and influence. Is it not likely in these circumstances that an open American engagement in favor of a Swedish diplomat would have increased the suspiciousness against him and further impaired his situation in front of criminally unscrupulous interrogators?"

V Stockholms-Tidningen (Social Democratic), February 10

"The American offer in April 1945 of diplomatic support in the search for Raoul Wallenberg was judged as non-desirable by the Swedish Moscow Minister, and the Foreign Office was of the same opinion. This is documented by an exchange of telegrams now made public."

ST then goes on to quote, first Dagens Nyheter's criticism of the Swedish passiveness at the time, and then Svenska Dagbladet's understanding attitude toward the Swedish rejection of the U.S. offer, adding:

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"This is how diametrically different judgments can be twenty years afterwards. It sheds light on the difficulty in establishing whether the Coalition Government, which was still in office in April 1945, and Foreign Minister Günther committed a misjudgment. Otherwise, it must be said to be of highly peripheral interest for a clarification of the Wallenberg case. It provides no new clue in the search."

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